

2^d THE
Plain-Man's
DEVOTION.

PART. I.

Being a
M E T H O D
O F

Daily Devotion.
By Dr Ashmole.

Fitted to the meanest
Capacities.

By the Author of the *Plain-mans*
Reply to the Catholic Missionaries.

L O N D O N.

Printed by T.B. for R. Wild at the
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Part. I.

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THE
Country-Parson
TO THE
PLAIN-MAN.

HAVING been instru-
mental, through
God's Blessing, to fix your
Belief, I shall now proceed,
by the same gracious assi-
stance, to direct your Pra-
ctice. And do very chear-
fully comply with an invi-
tation to so useful a Task,
as being fully convinced;
That it is much more pro-
fitable, both for me and
A 3 my

my Parish, to spend my time in Devotion and practical Discourses, than in these unpleasing Disputes.

Now the more effectually to perswade you to a holy and Religious Life, pray seriously consider this short Admonition.

You must not always be in this world; but in a very little time (perhaps before to Morrow-morning) you may be removed into the next. And then you will unalterably be fixt in an Eternal State, either of Happiness or Misery.

Now as in all other Cases

ses prudence doth direct
you to provide for the
worst, so chiefly it ought in
the concern of your Soul.
Wherein if you do miscar-
ry, the mistake will be ve-
ry fatal: you are utterly
ruined,

Let me therefore beg
of you (and I do it in
Christ's stead) immedi-
ately to break off your Sins
by Repentance. And re-
solve without delay to
make your Peace with
God, before you go
hence and be no more
seen.

To assist you in this ne-
cessary work, is the chari-

*table Design of these little
Papers. Wherein I shall in
the most familiar manner
even lead you by the hand;
and shall skew you step by
step what I would have
you to do. And if with
an honest and sincere
heart, you will observe
these following Directi-
ons; I trust we shall com-
fortably meet at the Day
of the Lord Jesus.*

A
M E T H O D
O F
Daily Devotion.

IN the Morning when you first awake, offer up your first Thoughts and Words to God, saying,

*Glory be to God the Father,
who hath made me and all the
world.*

*Glory be to God the Son, who
hath redeemed me and all Man-
kind.*

Glory be to God the Holy Ghost,

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who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God.

O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God: have mercy upon me a miserable Sinner:

As you are rising, say,

I laid me down and slept, and rose up again, for the Lord sustained me. [Psal. 3. 5.]

Whilst you are putting on your Cloaths, consider what you are to do that Day. And if any Company or Business which you are to be engaged in, shall be likely to tempt or to draw you to any Sin; As to Intemperance in Meats or Drink; to Lust, Anger, &c. then arm your self with resolutions against it, and say,

Lord,

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Lord, lead me not into Temptation, but deliver me from Evil.

I do renounce the Devil and all his works; the Poms and Vanity of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Fiesh. I believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith. And I will keep Gods holy will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of my Life.

All this, O my God, I am bound by the vpw of my Baptism to believe and do; and by thy help so I will.

As soon as you are drest, kneel down by your Bed-side; and with great Reverence and Devotion, as in Gods presence, lay your Prayers thus; or in the like manner.

A € Morning

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Morning Prayer for a Private Person.

I Bless and Praise thy holy Name, most gracious God, for all thy mercies bestowed upon me, from the time of my Birth to this present moment. I thank thee for the Preservation of the last Night; and for the sweet sleep and refreshment which I have enjoyed. O pardon and forgive me my manifold Sins [particularly — *here mention the greatest of thy Sins.*] I am truly sorry that I have offended thee; and do fully resolve to do so no more. Assist me this day in the works of my Calling; and prosper all my lawful under-

Daily Devotion.

3

undertakings. Give me Grace to be true and just in all my dealings; and to do unto all men, as I would they should do unto me. Help me to be contented with my present Condition. To be diligent in all my Duties. Watchful against all Temptations. So humble and modest, chaste and temperate, and so moderate in my most lawful enjoyments, that they never become a snare to me. Lord, I live here in a troublesome sinful world: But do thou take me into thy Protection, and then I am safe, Guide me by thy counsel here, and at last bring me to thy Glory. And this I humbly beg for the sake of Jesus Christ, my dear Lord
and

6 *Daily Devotion.*

and only Saviour, who hath
taught me thus to Pray,
Our Father, &c.

After Break-fast (at which the
greatest part of the Household
are supposed to be present) let
the Master of the Family, or
some other by his appointment,
distinctly and devoutly read
this, or the like, following
Prayer.

Morning Prayer for a Family.

O Holy Lord God Al-
mighty; before whom
all Knees do bend, and to
whom all Creatures in Hea-
ven and Earth do bow and
obey. Behold here poor, im-
potent, guilty Creatures hum-
bly prostrate before thy
Throne: Adoring thy Great-
ness;

Daily Devotion. 7

ness; and admiring thy Goodness: and desiring nothing more than faithfully to serve thee all the days of our Lives. For thou only art Holy; Thou only art the Lord: And Glory be to thee O Lord most High.

Praised be thy Name O Lord, from the rising up of the Sun to the going down of the same. Thou art our God, and we will thank thee: Thou art our God, and we will praise thee. We laid us down and slept, and rose up again, for the Lord sustained us. Thou hast lightened our Eyes, that we slept not in Death. Thou hast delivered us from the Terrors of the Night, and from the Evil that walketh in Darkness.

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Darkness. From Fire and Robbery, and all other sad Accidents. Thou renewest thy Mercies to us every Morning; and has given us one Day more, to serve thee and call upon thy Name.

O Lord our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this Day; defend us in the same by thy mighty Power; and grant that this Day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of Danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy Governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And we beg thy Blessing for all Man-kind. More particularly

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particularly for these Kingdoms in which we live. Bless, save and defend the King, and all the Royal Family, with all Orders of men amongst us, both in Church and State. Bless all our Friends and kind Relations. Those that have done us any Good; Lord reward them. Those that have done or wisht us any Evil; Father forgive them.

Comfort all those who are any ways afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate. Give them patience in their sufferings, and joy issue out of all their afflictions.

These mercies, and whatever else thou knowest to be most

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most convenient for us, we do humbly beg, in the name, and for the sake of Christ Jesus, our only Mediator and Intercessor ; who hath taught us thus to Pray,

Our Father, &c.

Prayers being finished ; as you go first out of your Doors, or as you return into the House, say,

Lord, Bless my going out and my coming in, from this time forth for evermore. [Psal. 121. 8.]

When you harness your Horses ; or take the Plough into your hand ; or begin any other work, say,

Prosper thou the work of my hands, O Lord, O prosper thou my handy-work. [Psalm. 90. 17.]

Having

HAVING thus commended your selves to God, you are now under his care and protection. And may comfortably expect his Blessing upon you and yours. Which, he for his part, will most certainly grant; provided, that you lead the rest of the Day according to this beginning. In order to which, be very careful *First* of your

Thoughts.

IF any idle, wandring and impertinent Thoughts; any wanton, lustful, and lascivious Thoughts; any envious, murdering, and malicious Thoughts shall arise in your hearts; then presently

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sently reject them, by thinking upon something else, and say,

Lord cleanse the Thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of thy holy Spirit.

Secondly, Take heed of your

Words.

1. **B**Eware of horrid *Cursing* and profane *Swearing*. And do not think to excuse such extravagance by saying; *I was provoked*; or *I am naturally Passionate*: It is *my Temper*, and *I cannot help it*. Which in plain English is this. *I have a mind to curse and to swear, and I will do it*. Know therefore that God hath given you *Reason*, and the *Grace* of his Holy Spirit, whereby to curb your natures, and
restrain

Daily Devotion. 13

restrain your vicious Inclinations, both in this and every other Instance.

2. To be noted for *Lying* (besides the Sin and Guilt in respect of God) will make you useless to the world. No Body will trust you. Or, if they can help it, will ever meddle with you. I advise you therefore (*Children* and *Servants*) when you have committed a fault, do not dare to excuse it with a *Lye*; but confess it freely. And then both your *Parents* and *Masters*, if they are prudent Persons, will more chearfully forgive you.

3. Let no filthy Communication proceed out of your Mouth

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Mouth. Avoid all obscene lascivious Discourse as you would the Plague; for 'tis as infectious, and kindles such a fire of Lust, as without repentance will certainly bring you to the fire of Hell.

4. Avoid that prattling Gossiping humour of talking about other mens matters, and censuring their Affairs. But *study to be quiet, and to do your own Business.* And if Religion will not restrain you; then be admonished in point of prudence, that *Silence is soon answered.*

For

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For the better regulating
of your

Actions.

Observe that Golden Rule
of our Blessed Saviour;
*Whatsoever you would that men
should do to you, do ye even so to
them.* Mat. 7. 12. Let this teach
you to be true and just in all
your dealings. To be very
punctual and exact in all
your Promises and Bargains.
*Not to go beyond or defraud your
Brother in any matter, for the
Lord is the avenger of all such.*
1 Thess. 4. 6.

2. Take heed of excessive
Drinking; which too often con-
cludes your Bargains. And
if your head shall be stronger
than

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that your Neighbours, then
to abuse his weakness, and
to impose upon him under
such Circumstances, is a
very base and dishonest pra-
ctice.

3. Beware of immoderate
Anger; or (as you phrase it)
of being in Passion: the conse-
quents of which are many
times dismal and amazing.
For you may do that in the
height of a Provocation
which, if it doth not cut you
off in the midst of your Days,
will bring your gray hairs
with sorrow to the Grave.
When therefore your *Children*
or your *Servants* have com-
mitted a fault, be not either
too rash, or too severe in
your *Censures*; but treat
them

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them with Reason, and argue the Case calmly with them. And if after fair Admonitions they will not regard you ; then it will be prudent to dismiss such Servants , and correct your Children.

4. Let young Persons be admonished to *flee youthful Lusts* : and to take heed of all filthy polluting practices ; which are very displeasing to a pure and holy God. Remember your Baptismal vow In which you did *renounce the carnal desires of the flesh, so that you will not follow nor be led by them.* Where observe. You did not promise never to have those Desires (for whilst you are young and healthful it cannot be otherwise) but you

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only promised, *not to follow nor be led by them, i.e. not to gratify those Desires and Inclinations in any unlawful way, not to be led and prompted by them to commit any Sin; or to do any thing which God hath forbidden.* If therefore; after *Prayers, Fasting, hard Labour, and other Methods of Mortification,* you are still troublesom and uneasy; then make use of the last Remedy; which becomes a Duty to those, who cannot live innocently without it. I shall commend it to you in St. Paul's words. *If they cannot contain, let them Marry for it is better to Marry than to burn.* 1 Cor. 7. 9. *Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefiled: but Whoremongers*

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and Adulterers God will judg.

Heb. 13. 4

Being tempted to uncleanness, or any other Sin; lift up your heart unto God, and say,

O Thou who art faithful, do not suffer me to be tempted above that I am able; but with the Temptation also make a way to escape, that I may be able to bear it. 1 Cor. 10. 13.

5. Take heed and beware of
COVETOUSNESS. Luke 12.

15. For the love of Money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after they have erred from the Faith, and pierced themselves through with many Sorrows.

1 Tim. 6. 10. Be not deceived—nor Thieves, nor COVE-

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TOUS——nor Extortioners shall
inherit the Kingdom of God.
1 Cor. 6. 9, 10.

From these and many o-
ther places of Scripture, you
are plainly convinced; that
Covetousness is a most per-
plexing and destructive pra-
ctice. And as such would more
carefully be avoided by you,
were it not so difficult to con-
vince you of your guilt. For
should I propose this Questi-
on to every Individual in the
whole Parish; Are you guilt-
ty of this Sin of Covetous-
ness? I should doubtless find
a great number of frugal,
careful, provident Persons; but
not a Covetous man among
you all. And therefore, for
your conviction, I shall brie-

Daily Devotion. 21

ly shew you what *Covetousness* is, and when a man may be truly said to be guilty of that Sin.

COVETOUSNESS is an irregular unlawful Desire, of getting and keeping wealth.

Now your Desires are then *irregular and unlawful*, when they do transgress those bounds and limits, which Almighty God by his Laws hath prescribed to them.

For God, who is a God of Order, hath established this method. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, Mat. 6. 33. Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God, 1 Cor. 10. 31.*

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Intimating; That the chief end and design, the great business for which you are sent into the World: it is to *Glorify God, by saving of your Souls.* And therefore when God is dishonoured, and the welfare of your Souls is neglected; then are your desires or your actions irregular and unlawful.

Particularly; If these Desires shall once prompt you, to cozen and cheat and defraud your Neighbour in any instance whatsoever: As, By telling Lyes to help out a good Bargain; By false Weights and Measures; By not paying Servants and Workmens wages; By not discharging just Debts when it is in your power; but keeping

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*keeping other mens Money, to
their prejudice, that you your
selves may trade with it; In
these and many other Instan-
ces you are apparently Co-
vettous.*

Nay further; Though you
can truly affirm, as you
often boast, that *you never
wronged any man living: But
are most just and punctual in
all your dealings; and were ne-
ver worse then your word.* Yet if
your desire of getting an E-
state shall be so eager, that
you shall neglect the Duties
of Religion! If, for Instance,
*you cannot stay to say your Pra-
yers in a Morning for fear of neg-
lecting your work!* And if when
you come into Gods House,
there to attend his immediate

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Service, you are then thinking of your worldly Concerns; how you may turn your Penny, and contrive your Affairs to the best advantage! If the *Festivals* and *Fasts* of the Church (those Market-days for your Souls) shall be a burthen to you; saying with those in the Prophet; *When will the New-Moon be gone, that we may sell Corn? and the Sabbath that we may set forth Wheat?* Amos 8.5.

If the care and concern for your Bodies, which should be subordinate to that of your Souls, shall be thus prefer'd before it; your desires are then irregular and unlawful, and you are evidently guilty

Daily Devotion. 25

ry of this Sin of Covetousness.

Nay yet further ; Though your Estates may be very honestly gotten ; yet if you do not *use* them as you ought, nor employ them to those ends for which they were given , you are still Covetous.

Now the only end of wealth, is to supply our occasions, and to enable us to do good both to our selves and others.

He therefore that lives meanly and below his Estate, when there is no reason so to do. That shall pinch and pine his own body, by denying

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nying it those necessary refreshments it wants. That shall neglect the Education and the Marriage of his Children; as resolving to part with his money and his life together. Finally, He who shall transgress that most necessary Duty, of being charitable to the Poor, and relieving those that are in Distress; his Gold and his Silver, for want of use, is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against him. James 5. 3.

Let your Conversation be without Covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Heb. 13. 5.

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Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Phil.4. 6, 7.

Being return'd home in the Evening, and your work being finished; before you go to Bed, let the Master of the Family again call his Household together. And I wish I could perswade you, every night to read some portion of *Holy Scripture*. But lest that should seem too great a burden upon the Week-day, I shall reserve it as a proper Task for the *Lords-day* and the Festivals of the Church (for the due observation of which I do purpose, God willing, to give you particular Directions in another Paper.) However though you may

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want time, or are too much wearied to read in your *Bible*, yet pray do not omit to commend your selves to Gods Protection, in this or the like manner.

Evening Prayer for a Family.

A Almighty and Everlasting God; and in Jesus Christ our most Merciful and Gracious Father. We thy poor unworthy Creatures, do most humbly present our selves before thee: to confess our sins, and to beg thy pardon. To acknowledge thy mercies, and to bewail our abuses of them.

We have transgressed our Duty to Thee, our Neighbour, and our selves: and
that

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that both in Thought, in Word and in Deed: by doing those Things which thou hast expressly forbidden; and by neglecting those Duties thou hast commanded us. And this not only through Ignorance and Frailty, but sometimes knowingly and willfully; with repeated vows and resolutions to the contrary. Nay, O Lord, we have despised that Goodness of thine which should lead us to Repentance: hardning our hearts against all those means, which thou hast used for our amendment.

And now, Lord, what can we expect having done these Things, but to be utterly abhorred and forsaken by
the

30 *Daily Devotion.*

thee? that is indeed the due reward of our Sins. But, O Lord, there is mercy with thee that thou mayst be feared.

O fit us for that mercy, by giving us a deep and hearty Repentance ; a sincere Contrition ; a true sorrow for, and perfect hatred of, all our sins, with a firm resolution to forsake them. And then, according to thy Goodness, let thine anger and thy wrath be turned away from us. Look upon us in thy Son, our Blessed Saviour ; and for the Merits of his Sufferings pardon all our Sins.

And since we are not able of our selves so much as to think

think one good Thought ;
we beseech thee to work in
us both to will and to do ac-
cording to thy good pleasure.
And by the Grace of thy
Holy Spirit, do thou so re-
new and purify our hearts,
that we may become new
Creatures ; utterly forsaking
every evil way, and living in
constant , sincere , universal
Obedience to thee all the
rest of our Days.

Make us humble and mo-
dest : patient and submissive :
chast and temperate : just
and righteous : kind and
charitable : diligent in our
Callings ; and zealous for
thy Glory. That so having
behaved our selves as good
and faithful Servants, we
may by thy mercy at the last
be

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be received into the joy of
our Lord.

And we desire, thou knowest, the good all Mankind as well as our own. Particularly we implore thy Mercies towards these Kingdoms wherein we live. Remember not Lord our Offences, nor the Offences of our Forefathers; but spare us good Lord, and have patience with us, if perhaps we may bring forth better fruit, becoming thy holy Gospel, and all the care thou hast taken about us. Lord save and defend the King, and establish his Throne in Righteousness: that we may see many happy days under his Government. Hear the daily
Prayers

Daily Devotion. 33

Prayers of thy Church for him; That he may always incline to thy will, and walk in thy way: and study to preserve thy People committed to his charge, in Wealth, Peace and Godliness. And grant, that we and all his Subjects (duly considering whose Authory he hath) may faithfully serve, honour, and humbly obey him, in thee, and for thee, according to thy blessed word and Ordinance.

Bless him and us in all his Relations; in his Council; in all the Nobility, Clergy, Gentry and Commonalty. That every one of them may uprightly and zealously do their Duty; to the main-
D tainance

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tainance of thy true Religion,
and the peace and welfare of
these Nations.

Comfort all those who are
any ways afflicted or distressed,
in Mind, Body, or Estate,
especially those who suffer for
the Testimony of a good
Conscience ; give them patience
under their Sufferings ;
and an happy issue out of
all their Afflictions.

Let thy Blessings rest upon
this Family, and all that are
near and dear to us. Grant
both to them and us whatsoever
thou seest necessary, either
for our Bodies or our Souls.

And we desire to return
our thankful acknowledgments,
for all thy mercies
both

Daily Devotion. 35

both Spiritual and Temporal. Particularly ; for thy Preservation of us all this Day past. Let the same good Providence watch over us this Night, Keep us by thy Grace from all works of Darknes; and defend us by thy Power from all Dangers. From Fire and Robbery, and all other sad Accidents. Grant us moderate refreshing sleep, such as may fit us for thy Service the Day following. That after the few Days and Nights we have to pass in this world, we may come to thy eternal rest together with Christ Jesus. In whose blessed Name and Words we further Pray, saying
Our Father, &c.

After Prayers the whole Family doth betake themselves to their

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rest. And being come into your Chamber, sit down a little, and consider how you have spent the Day past. Glance over in your Thoughts what you have said and done. Observe likewise what particular Blessing and Deliverance you have received. If your Behaviour hath been regular; Bless God for it. If sinful and extravagant in any instance, do not dare to go into your Bed, till you have beg'd his Pardon. Many as healthful as your self have been found dead the next Morning. Kneel down therefore, and distinctly say this, or the like Prayer.

Evening Prayer for a private Person.

I Bless and praise thy holy Name, most Gracious God, for all thy mercies bestowed upon me, from the time of my Birth

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Birth to this present moment.
I thank thee for the Preser-
vation of the Day past. Bless-
ed be thy Name for my con-
tinued health, and food and
raiment. Blessed be thy Name
that my Bones are not bro-
ken: that I am not now
groaning under the sorest
pains, but that I live at ease,
and dwell in safety Night and
Day.

O Pardon and forgive
me my manifold Sins [parti-
cularly ~~the~~ *(here mention
the sins of the day past.)*] I am
truly sorry that I have thus
offended thee; and do fully
purpose to do so no more.

Assist me, by thy Grace
and holy Spirit, to make good
these

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these pious Resolutions: and with an honest sincerity to continue in my Duty, both towards thee my God, and towards my Neighbour.

I beg thy Blessing for [*my Wife and Children, my Husband and Children, Father and Mother, Brethren and Sisters, Master Mistress* ——— You must name these Relations, according as you stand related.] O that all my friends may be thine. And if I have any Enemies; Father forgive them.

Relieve and comfort all those that are in any Distress. Make the Earth to bring forth its increase in due season, and let all honest and industrious People be succeeded in their Labours.

Take

Daily Devotion. 39

Take me into thy care and protection this Night. And when I shall awaken again in the Morning ; help me to employ all my renewed strength to thy honour and Glory ; through Jesus Christ : in whose Blessed name and words I commend my self to thy infinite mercies, saying,

Our Father, &c.

This Prayer may be likewise said in the Family ; when there is not time, by reason of some extraordinary occasions, for the other. But then you must change the number : saying all along (*we*) for (*I*) and (*us*) for (*me*) and (*our*) for (*my*) &c.

At your going to Bed, say,

*I will lay me down in peace,
and*

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*and take my rest, for it is thou,
Lord, only that makest me dwell
in safety, Psal. 4. 9.*

Having composed your self to
sleep, close your Eyes with the
last words of your Blessed Savi-
our, saying.

*Father into thy hands I com-
mend my Spirit. Luk. 23.
46.*

I have given you no Directi-
ons about Children: since your
own prudence will best suggest
such Instructions, as are most suit-
able to their different Capacities.
But let me beg of you, both as to
Children and Servants, to take up
Foskue's resolution; *As for me and
my House, we will serve the Lord.*

F I N I S.

